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NEW ORGANIZATION FORMED: CONCERNED WITH LOCAL CHURCH AUTONOMY

After several years of preliminary meetings, personal conferences in several states and discussions at the Southern Baptist Convention, a number of Southern Baptist chaplains and veterans met in Washington, D. C., January 17, 1957, and formally organized the **SOUTHERN BAPTIST CHAPLAINS AND MILITARY ASSOCIATION**.

The purpose of the organization has officially been stated as follows:

"To safeguard and to strengthen the faith and morality of our chaplains and other military personnel; to perpetuate and deepen the bonds of understanding and fellowship between the military personnel and their churches and denominations; to give encouragement and assistance to such personnel in the performance of their duties in the military establishment in keeping with their convictions as Baptist in upholding our traditional doctrines, **with special attention to the autonomy of the local church**; such assistance to be extended also to such personnel in the Veterans' Administration or Industry; to give special aid or temporary assistance to such personnel upon their separation from Government service."

The president of the organization is the Reverend James A. Bryant, pastor of the Wisconsin Avenue Baptist Church, Washington, D. C. In the constitution that has been adopted, the nature of the work of the organization is described in reference to four committees, which are listed as: (1) Committee on the Autonomy of the Local Church; (2) Committee on Freedom of the Press; (3) Committee on Information; (4) Committee on Separation of Church and State.

... WHY HAS THIS ORGANIZATION COME INTO EXISTENCE? ... For information concerning some important incidents in the background, SEE THE STORY ON THE INSIDE (starting on page 5) ABOUT THE RECENT "RESIGNATION" OF A BAPTIST EDITOR.

OUR COMMITTEE HAS REQUESTED that sufficient time be provided on the program of the S. B. C. in Chicago this May for discussion, pro and con, on the proposed constitutional amendment which is scheduled to be voted on by the messengers. As an Associated Press article of Jan. 8 announced, this request has been sent to the Rev. Ira H. Peak, chairman of the

convention's committee on order of business; also, Dr. C. C. Warren, convention president, has been notified of this. Specifically, we have asked that one hour's time be set aside for discussion from the floor on the issue, with equal time to be provided for those desiring to speak for and against the proposed amendment.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 4)

James M. Bulman,

Editor

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What Readers Are Saying

From a CALIFORNIA minister:
"Have just read your Southern Baptist Free Press. It seems to be filling a definite need in Southern Baptist denominational life."

A MISSISSIPPI reader states: "Our brethren who are in the lead in Baptist denominational affairs seem to have an obsession, and they are passing this obsession on to others. The scheme they have worked out, and are working out still, creates a spirit of intolerance, and this means the spirit of persecution. Their Baptist organizational set-up is moving on at an accelerated rate. Those who come in and take over as it moves along will be willing to see it go further than those in control now would have it. The present trend, as I see it, has in it the possibility, and probability, of a religious organization as authoritarian as any outside of Catholicism. It may be that it has gone too far to turn it back or correct it."

From a VIRGINIA minister: "The January issue of Southern Baptist Free Press was tops."

A MISSOURI minister, however, was much displeased with our December issue: "You may be ever so sincere in publishing the little paper, 'Southern Baptist Free Press,' but I sincerely doubt the wisdom of mailing it to all of our pastors. . . . Honestly, I am forced to disagree with your conclusions. I know of a number of churches that have been stolen by enemies of our organized work. . . . I notice on page ten of the December issue that you used the words under the cartoon, 'with apologies to Herb Block.' There should be another apology. An apology

should be made to all cooperating Southern Baptist churches. We also note at the top of the first page that you have followed the government regulations and have listed this material under 'bulk material.' It seems to me that it would also be appropriate for the government to have a 'bunk' rate which would apply to such publications as yours. Why don't you spend your time promoting the welfare of our work instead of picking out items here and there to complain about?"

A NORTH CAROLINA layman writes: "I am in thorough accord with the work you are trying to do through 'Southern Baptist Free Press.' I have read every issue from the beginning. I have read the Supreme Court findings in the Rocky Mount Church case; but when certain people vote 'confidence' [referring to the recent vote of confidence given to Dr. M. A. Huggins by the General Board of N. C. Baptist State Convention; see page 11 of this issue] before they have read the record, it seems to indicate a willingness to support expediency instead of fact. . . . Although I have attended church and Sunday school all my life, I am sick of church politics and unprofessional conduct in the packing of committees and the maneuverings to bar proper discussion and examination of matters that should receive the attention of the entire conference."

It has become a rather usual thing for us to receive in the mail carbon copies of letters that have been written to various Southern Baptist officials. The following is a letter written by a NORTH CAROLINA minister to DR. L. L. CARPENTER, Editor of the N. C. State Baptist

paper, the *Biblical Recorder*, regarding the October issue of the *Southern Baptist Free Press*:

"I have just received my unsolicited copy of the Southern Baptist Free Press. It has provoked regrets but more importantly it has provoked a question and comment which I wish to share with you to answer and to use.

"First, there have been a number of insinuations and statements to the effect that the *Biblical Recorder* would not print James M. Bulman's side of the Rocky Mount case and that 'even constructive criticism of anything in our Baptist set-up cannot get into Baptist papers now.' This last statement is, as all generalizations, vague and printed without one particular incident being cited. And from my own reading of our denominational (southwide and state) publications I know it is not entirely true. I have seen articles on both sides of the Rocky Mount question in the *Biblical Recorder* and in the *Review and Expositor* of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. But I have this question and feel it should be made clear in its answer: what is the policy of the *Biblical Recorder* in printing articles of a contrary nature and providing space for writers who wish to have materials printed in our state Baptist paper?

"If the policy of our Baptist publications does not prevent the printing of 'constructive' criticism then the Southern Baptist Free Press is founded on a lie and needless to say this is poor motive for any Baptist publication, much less one under the guise of 'free press.' Its motive is subject to further suspect on the part of thinking, loving (Christian) people when it prints unsigned quotes, generalizations — without facts, attacks personalities (when Scripture clearly advises that differences are to be settled privately or by the church Matt. 18), and uses insinuating questions rather than simple, straight-forward answers.

"For further truthful, enlightenment on the Rocky Mount case I refer all Baptists to Robert Baker's article in the October, 1956 issue of *Review and Expositor*.

"Men who seek the truth will never resort to motives that are suspect; men

who are loyal to the truth need never fear the ultimate consequences though abused by unscrupulous men using half-truths; 'for if this work be of men, it will come to nought' (Acts 5:38)."

As regards the statement, that "even constructive criticism of anything in our Baptist set-up cannot get into Baptist papers now," we would call attention to the fact that this was printed in our October issue as a statement from a letter of one of our readers. The manner in which the policy of this paper has been expressed by way of criticism of the denominational press has been set forth in our July issue. Although this paper has never expressed itself editorially in the words of the letter quoted in our October issue, it might well be that — excepting the paper of Virginia Baptists, the *Religious Herald* — "even constructive criticism of anything in our Baptist set-up cannot get into Baptist papers NOW." We do not deny that there have been occasions in times past when, even in the *Biblical Recorder*, criticism of certain things in the denominational set-up has been printed. But very much water has flowed under the proverbial bridge in recent months. In N. C. the controversy over local church autonomy long ago became "too hot" for discussion on both sides to be allowed in the state paper. As to how much things have "tightened up" in other Baptist publications in recent months, we do not have complete knowledge; although we are aware of certain indications that the situation, in some places at least, is getting worse and worse. Readers of our July issue may recall that we acknowledged that the publication of Southern Baptist Seminary, the *Review and Expositor*, had allowed "some real freedom of discussion"; but as to whether even that publication *now* still has its doors open, we do not know. Following Professor Robert Baker's article, above referred to, in the October issue of *Review and Expositor*, offering an answer to this editor's article, "Baptist Principle Under Trial" (which appeared in the July, 1955 issue of *Review and Expositor*), this editor promptly submitted to the *Review and Expositor* an article in reply to Professor Baker. As yet, the *Review and*

Expositor has not said "yes" or "no" in regard to whether this reply will be allowed to be printed.

Since we have followed the policy of not printing the names of those whose letters are quoted, perhaps our readers would be interested in knowing our reasons for this. This policy stems from a desire to *protect* those individuals who have expressed themselves in criticism of certain things in the denominational set-up. We well know the danger that one, especially a pastor, might encounter in going against the denominational leadership.

From The Denominational Press

In order to have the viewpoint of the denominational press represented, we offer the following from Mr. W. Barry Garrett, Editor of the Arizona state Baptist paper, *Baptist Beacon*. This was printed recently in the *Biblical Recorder*, bearing the title, "Free Voices for Free People":

"Southern Baptist state papers have now reached a combined circulation of more than 1,250,000 per week. Surveys reveal that three persons come in contact with and are influenced by each of these papers. This means that every week more than three and a half million people are directly reached by your Baptist state papers. . . .

"The survival and success of a democracy depends on an informed and intelligent citizenship. . . . When Baptists are informed, suspicion, distrust, and bickering disappear. Ignorant Baptists can be as contentious as quarreling crows, but informed Baptists are as harmonious as a chorus of mocking birds. . . .

"We have heard from certain sources that the editors of the Baptist state papers are the '*captives of the denominational hierarchy*' and that they are only 'yes men' who print nothing but the regular party line. It is unnecessary to answer these charges against free voices for a free people. However, we plead guilty to the charge of being 'captive editors.'

"Your Baptist state paper editors are captives of their convictions. They believe the Bible to be the inspired word of God, . . . (etc.) . . .

"Your editors are captives of Christian courtesy. They believe in being gentlemen in relation to those with whom they disagree. Principles of honesty and integrity and high ethical standards bind them to a certain course of action.

"We are captive editors because of our convention loyalty. . . .

"Your editors profoundly believe in the purposes and programs of the denomination. They are pledged to preserve and promote doctrinal integrity, denominational unity, and our missionary, educational and benevolent objectives" (emphasis supplied).

(Continued from page one)

This amendment would add the following to Article IV, the section on "Authority" in the constitution:

"This convention does not claim that affiliation with this convention is in any way necessary for a church to be a Missionary Baptist Church; nor does this convention claim that affiliation with any other Baptist body, whether district association or state convention, is in any way necessary for a church to be affiliated with this convention; nor does this convention claim that a church's affiliation with this convention, as conceived by this convention, is in any degree of such a nature as would prevent a church that once has entered into affiliation with this convention from discontinuing that affiliation should that church for any reason decide to discontinue that affiliation."

Dr. Rand's column on Catholicism will be resumed next month. Also there will be an article by him on the "Inside" of the denominational set-up.

PROMINENT EDITOR OF BAPTIST STATE PAPER SAYS HE WAS GIVEN CHOICE OF "RESIGNING OR BEING REMOVED FROM OFFICE

B. J. MURRIE, until recently President of the Southern Baptist Press Association, submitted his resignation as Editor of the Baptist state paper of Illinois on October 3, 1956. A few days later, on October 8, he stated in a letter (to *Dr. Lemuel Hall*):

"The axe has finally fallen. I was called in last Wednesday and given the ultimatum. Enclosed you will find a copy of my resignation. . . . I know what it is to be let out of a job. A great burden has been lifted and I am free. . . .

". . . The great burden has been lifted and the tension is gone. I STILL HAVE MY CONSCIENCE AND INTEGRITY WHICH I PROPOSE TO MAINTAIN. I will hold revival meetings, . . . or anything that may come in my direction" (emphasis supplied).

What was behind this "resignation"?

It seems clear enough that the answer is to be found in connection with matters which were brought to a head by the case of *Dr. Lemuel Hall*.

Dr. Hall, whose doctorate is from Southern Baptist Seminary, was for 6 years a member of the Foreign Mission Board of the S. B. C., was for a somewhat longer period District Secretary of Missions in Texas, and has held several responsible committee positions in the S. B. C. After serving for some time in the chaplaincy, in 1954 he was refused "ecclesiastical endorsement" by the Chaplain's Commission, a department of the Home Mission Board of the S. B. C. Dr. Hall has claimed that the Chaplain's Commission would not give him any reason for this action, and, according to the Board of Appeals and Review of the U. S. Civil Service Commission, "*Dr. Hall was not accorded an opportunity to answer or refute the reasons for the withdrawal of his 'Ecclesiastical endorsement.'*" Mr. Murray saw in this action by

the Southern Baptist Chaplain's Commission something which he considered a violation of the principle of local church autonomy as well as that of separation of church and state. Thus he wrote as follows in *The Illinois Baptist*, on Jan. 27, 1956:

"Local Baptist churches are the final authority on denominational endorsement. For some time the Chaplain's Commission, a department of the Home Mission Board, has been giving so-called denominational endorsement for Chaplains in the Army, Navy, and other branches of government service. . . . Withdrawing denominational approval is a matter of church decision. Any commission that assumes this responsibility should assume the responsibility of ordaining him and furnishing him a place to preach. Those functions belong to denominations which have ecclesiastical power invested in recognized bishops or conferences. Such authority is not compatible with . . . Baptist churches . . .

"Many people, including most government officials, are totally ignorant of Baptist Church polity. . . . They are familiar with power coming from 'ordained authority' in the form of a bishop or high-church authority. . . . The church [according to the Baptist way] votes on receiving each individual. The church then votes on his fitness for an ordination to the ministry. It alone can decide on the individual's unfitness. This authority cannot be delegated to or assumed by any other body, and the church remains a democratic group with equal rights for every individual. This one point has not been seen by some people in our Baptist heritage. This must be maintained to have complete separation of Church and State. When the government recognizes any other body on the

question of the validity of a Baptist minister, other than the church to which he belongs, it has crossed over into the public domain of that church. Help keep Church and State separated."

Then, following the release of some information from the office of the Chaplain's Commission on August 24, 1956, Mr. Murrie made an extensive investigation of the past policy of the Commission. Having concluded from his investigation that "a definite pattern" had developed, which pattern was felt to be such as to raise some serious questions, — Mr. Murrie wrote to DR. ALFRED CARPENTER, Director of the Southern Baptist Chaplain's Commission, on Sept. 12, 1956, as follows:

"The release from your office on the date of August 24, 1956 . . . is a direct occasion for this letter and the following questions. The request for 'a strong editorial' is noted. Some things suggested by it with an accumulation of other materials have put some questions in my mind. I am coming directly to you for answers. Since receiving this request, I have read all the reports of the Chaplain's Commission since 1940. Out of all this has grown the following questions . . . [Of the 44 questions, some of the more interesting are the following:]

"There is no reference to the members of the Commission being elected by the S. B. C. Are they a self-perpetuating committee or commission? . . .

"In 1945 it was referred to as the committee on Army and Navy Chaplains. In 1947 it was referred to as the Chaplain's Commission. By what authority did the committee become a Commission?

"Is the Commission responsible to the Home Mission Board or the S. B. C.?

"Where does the Commission get the authority and who makes the policies? Are you reviewed by anyone and are the decisions of the Commission subject to review by the Home Mission Board or the S. B. C.?

"The reports show that the Director [and others] . . . have made extended trips to various sectors and visit Chaplains. Who paid the expenses on these

trips, The Home Mission Board, the Chaplain's Commission or the government? Did the Home Mission Board pay part of the expense and the government part? Did you fly at government expense on one of its planes? Were these trips on invitation of the government? If transportation was on government planes, how do you justify denominational business at government expense? *Can we maintain separation of church and state when any part of this expense is paid by the government?* What about the entertainment on the bases? . . .

"In 1950 the second emphasis was, 'to adjust our policies in keeping with the rapid transition within the military, both in procedure and personnel.' A program was launched, 'to strengthen our Baptist position with official Washington.' *Who fixes the policy of the Commission? Washington or the Commission, the Home Mission Board or the S. B. C.?*

"*There is no report of annual endorsements until 1949. Why was this policy changed? Did the government ask you to change this policy? By what authority from the S. B. C. did you have to endorse men only for one year? Was this change part of the adjusting policies?* . . .

"Has this policy [of annual endorsement] been used to prevent men from going where they did not want to go, or to get them out of service by refusing to endorse them for the next year? Could it not be so used? . . .

"DOES THIS POLICY SUBJECT OUR CHAPLAINS TO THE SAME SYSTEM USED BY CONNECTIONAL DENOMINATIONS [such as Methodist, Presbyterian, and Roman Catholic] TO CONTROL THEIR MINISTERS [BUT] WITHOUT ASSUMING THE RESPONSIBILITY OF PROVIDING CONTINUOUS EMPLOYMENT FOR THEM?"

"Was the Commission set up with authority to set the tenure of service of those it endorsed? Was it not set up to endorse *for the military* the denominational fitness of those entering government service? After certification, employment, and pay *by the government*, is it not *the government's function* to decide how long the person shall be employed? Is it not the function of a LO-

CAL BAPTIST CHURCH to decide on the qualifications, to recognize and ordain a Baptist minister and decide when he ceased to be recognized as a Baptist preacher and prefer charges against him and require his credentials to be removed?

"Has the Army or Navy or any Government Agency directly or indirectly, either by oral or written request, ever asked you or the Commission to withdraw endorsement from an individual so he could be terminated from his position?"

"If so, was the request granted? If this policy is followed, is it a part of 'strengthening our Baptist position with official Washington?'"

"In the 1946 report, you show that endorsement was withdrawn from four chaplains because of conduct unbecoming to a Baptist minister. . . . You report endorsement withdrawn in 1950 from six active-duty Chaplains, also withdrawals in 1951, 1952, and 1953, *but you do not report any in 1954, 1955, or 1956. Were there not some endorsements withheld during those years? Why were they not reported? IS THIS A CHANGE IN THE POLICY OF THE COMMISSION SO THE PUBLIC RECORD WILL NOT SHOW THE CONTROL OF THE COMMISSION OVER THE MEN EMPLOYED BY THE GOVERNMENT?*"

"In the case of withholding annual endorsement, is it the policy of the Commission to apprise the individual of the reasons why endorsement is withheld?"

"Is it the policy of the Commission to withhold this information from the individual and **DEPRIVE HIM OF HIS CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS** of being able to meet his accuser and to know what he is accused of? Do you change your definition of ecclesiastical endorsement when the government changes its definition? Do you add more to your definition of ecclesiastical endorsement than that held by the government? . . ."

"Has there been a policy set up by the Commission which determines the causes for not giving an annual endorsement? If there is a policy was it approved by the Home Mission Board of the S. B. C. or its Executive Committee? . . ."

"Did you receive notice or protest, either oral or written, from chaplains about a reported order or directive in circulation, which prohibited Protestant and Baptist chaplains from holding worship services in Catholic churches in the European sector? . . . Were there any protest to you which suggested that Protestant chaplains were forced to hold their services out in the rain while Catholic churches stood empty in the area? If there was such an order or directive, do you know who gave it, and who the commanding officer in the European sector was who countermanded this order? In order to clear up a report, this is a straight out personal question to the Director of the Commission, is the story true that a Southern Baptist preacher spoke or wrote to you personally and called you a "**Gutless Wonder**" or some similar appellation *for failing to protest the reported directive mentioned above?* . . ."

"Are Baptist Chaplains prevented from getting promotions on the larger ships in the Navy due to their doctrinal stand? Do you know of any instances where Baptist Chaplains have been forced to go against their convictions due to orders or pressure? *Is it the policy of the Commission to stand behind the Chaplain when questions like the above arise?* . . ."

"For historical purposes it may be all right to report what chaplains do in the services and as a matter of information, but where do you get your authority to ask *and demand* a monthly report of their activities from men you do not employ or pay? . . ."

"In checking the several hundred separation releases from you which are on file in this office, I note that the comments and commendations or lack of same, were based largely on the monthly reports given by the chaplains. *Where do you get the authority to hold what amounts to an ecclesiastical BIG STICK over a Baptist preacher in failing to give him favorable recommendation on separation because he did not send in monthly reports to an office which neither employs or pays him?*"

"Does not this policy set up an

ecclesiastical oligarchy by a committee which no person on the floor of the S. B. C. has the power to nominate, or means of regulating, and does, both in fact and spirit, **CONTROL AND SEEKS TO CONTROL BAPTIST MINISTERS WHO ARE UNDER NO OBLIGATION TO THE COMMISSION** and who are under orders of the government?

"Is not this policy patterned after and does it not work exactly like that of Connectional Denominations which ordain, control and furnish pastorates to their ministers?"

"How do you reconcile this policy in a democracy?" (above emphasis supplied).

THREE WEEKS LATER

According to Mr. Murrie, it was just *three weeks* from the time of writing the above letter that he was "called in" and "given the ultimatum." On that day, October 3, he submitted the following resignation to the Executive Committee and the Literature Committee of the Illinois Baptist Association:

"Having received a release from the Chaplain's Commission of the S. B. C. [on August 24] and a request 'for a strong editorial', I read the reports of the Commission since 1940 and with other information and reports wrote a letter with a series of 44 questions on the work and reports of the Commission. This letter was sent to Dr. Alfred Carpenter. A letter in reply was received *without a notation of a carbon copy being sent to the executive secretary*. The general contents of the letter were discussed with the executive secretary when he asked to read the letter. The letter was shown to the executive secretary by the Commission. An honest attempt was made to make the matter strictly between the editor and the Commission and to help the Commission.

"Because I have been charged with causing a breach of public relations between two Baptist organizations, I **HAVE BEEN GIVEN THE ALTERNATIVE OF RESIGNING OR BEING REMOVED FROM OFFICE**. After consultation with the Literature Committee, I submit my resignation effective today, October 3, 1956 with the understanding that all personal letters and correspond-

ence, books, papers and personal property be removed and that I have until October 19, 1956 to do so; and that I shall have use of the associate in carrying on any correspondence and returning materials belonging to others until October 19, 1956; and that the salary be paid until December 31, 1956 and expenses through October 3, 1956" (emphasis supplied).

Then, on October 18, 1956, Mr. Murrie wrote to **DR. ALFRED CARPENTER** the following:

"At the request of the Literature Committee, I am writing you and stating that my letter to you on September 12, 1956 was on my own initiative. . . . Furthermore, I used every effort I knew to keep it strictly confidential. I did not want to put you on the spot and therefore did not send a carbon copy to Porter Routh or show the finished letter to anybody and have not up to now. . . .

"There was a resolution prepared by a Baptist layman setting forth what the Chaplain's Commission could and could not do and brought to the convention in Kansas City. It was to be offered on the floor of the convention. I heard about it through the grape vine and after a conference in the headquarters hotel the resolution, which was mimeographed, was not presented. I feel like I had some small part in preventing this from coming before the floor of the S. B. C. I sincerely hoped that the letter will give you enough knowledge so that the occasion would not arise which would bring it to the floor of the convention in Chicago. This is my home state and I did not want that kind of discussion.

"I have known for two or three years that the possibility of a feature story has been considered for a National Magazine. I think that I am correct in saying that one writer has already asked to write an article. I have advised against such an article appearing. I know there are other papers that have information for articles and others have sought them [The SOUTHERN BAPTIST FREE PRESS has had such information, and,

as was indicated in our August issue, we have planned to discuss certain phases of the subject.] . . .

"With this partial background material you may be able to see why I asked certain questions. If I failed to aid you to be able to answer some questions that have been under circulation and discussion for some time, I am sorry. . . .

"The Literature Committee voted that I be asked to offer you an apology for the matter. Since I am no longer under their direction I feel that such request is not binding. But I'll go a second mile and offer one anyway. . . . If in my desire to help, my ignorance of knowing how to do so has caused you to be offended, I am sorry. It was a mistake of the head and not of the heart. I have a concern for the whole Baptist Convention. I do not apologize for writing the letter or trying to be helpful in my ignorance. I came directly to you with it. I thought it would be treated as strictly confidential. . . .

". . . I used the best methods I knew how to keep them [the questions] con-

fidential. *In your answer to me you did not indicate that a carbon copy was going to the Executive Secretary. THIS WOULD APPEAR TO BE DELIBERATE IN ORDER TO BRING PRESSURE ON ME AND WAS THE IMMEDIATE CAUSE OF MY ENFORCED RESIGNATION.* This has caused questions to be asked throughout the convention. You made the letter to become public property" (emphasis supplied).

According to Mr. Murrie's explanation, therefore, his *daring to raise some questions* before a department of the Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention led to his removal as Editor of the Baptist state paper of Illinois. An interesting aftermath of the whole affair was the recent appropriation of \$360,000.00 for the Illinois Baptist Association by the Home Mission Board of the S. B. C.

(The above information is from written material given to the Southern Baptist Free Press by Dr. Hall. According to Dr. Hall, this material was sent to *all* of the Southern Baptist state papers.)



THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST DOCTRINE OF "COOPERATION," in so far as it has been expressed in a statement of faith, has been most notably set forth in the articles of faith adopted by the S. B. C. in 1925. Article XXII, entitled "Cooperation," says, "Christ's people should, *as occasion requires*, organize such associations and conventions as may best secure cooperation for the great objects of the Kingdom of God. Such organizations have *no authority* over each other or over the churches. They are *voluntary* and *advisory* bodies designed to elicit, combine, and direct the energies of our people in the most effective manner . . ." (emphasis supplied). But even this statement, which so clearly describes cooperation as a voluntary matter, was viewed by the Baptist historian, Dr. W. W. Barnes, as going too far in the direction of centralization. Some twenty years before he repudiated on the witness stand the Baptist principle of the complete autonomy of the local church, Dr. Barnes thus criticized the above-quoted statement on "cooperation" as tending to depart from local church autonomy and as placing too much emphasis on the denominational organization:

"The convention even endeavored to give a doctrinal approval and support for the centralized administration that had developed. *Cooperation* (Article 22) is placed in the same category as the *unity of God, the deity of Christ, regeneration, etc.*, as an article of faith!" (*The Southern Baptist Convention: A Study in the Development of Ecclesiology*, Seminary Hill, Texas, 1934, reprint, 1946, p. 8)

There are many indications that what in 1925 was made "an article of faith" has now become **THE** article of faith. In fact, *this hardly states the matter strongly enough!* In 1925 support of the denominational organization was clearly defined as being a **VOLUNTARY** matter; but now, in 1957, there are many indications that support of the denominational organization has ceased to be a matter of "*cooperation*" and has practically become a matter of "*coercion*".

One indication of the way in which support of the denominational organization — and interpreted more in terms of "*coercion*" than of "*cooperation*" —

has become **THE** article of faith is the stress which is nowadays placed on this matter when one is examined in prospect for ordination to the ministry. Our attention has been called to the recent action by an examining council representing Liberty Baptist Association, in North Carolina. The Sheets Memorial Baptist Church asked that a council be called to examine Mr. Billy Young in prospect for ordination to the gospel ministry.

In the examination, no doubt was raised as to the genuineness of his call to the gospel ministry; nor was there dissatisfaction as to the expression of his doctrinal convictions. But when the examination got into the realm of denominational finances, difficulty was encountered. When asked about the principle of "cooperation," the candidate stated, "*I believe in cooperation and think we should cooperate together for the glory of God.*" But it was his attitude toward a particular program of cooperation that was being sought; he was asked specifically concerning "*the Cooperative Program.*" The candidate stated, "*I feel each church has a right to support what part of the program it wants to.*" And he said that there were features of that program which he could not endorse, mentioning in particular Wake Forest College and the position of its president, Dr. Harold Tribble.

Although official acknowledgement was made of the candidate's "strong doctrinal beliefs" and "understanding of the Bible," the council voted 10 to 7 against recommending his ordination. The remark was made in the council, in answer to the question of why there was opposition to recommending his ordination, that there was need of being sure that "he is a Southern Baptist loyalist."

In spite of the recommendation of the council, however, Sheets Memorial Baptist Church, by unanimous vote of its members, went on and ordained Mr. Young.

For A Year's Subscription to
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SEND ONE DOLLAR TO:
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THE LATEST DEVELOPMENT IN THE N. C. SITUATION concerning the conflict over the autonomy of the local church took place on Tuesday, Jan. 15, at the semi-annual meeting of the General Board of the N. C. Baptist State Convention, in Raleigh.

When the board met last July, it was presented with a written request from our Committee for Baptist Church Autonomy, Inc., that the board obtain from its own auditor a report as to whether any State Convention funds had been expended in any way in connection with the North Rocky Mount Church case. At that time the board did nothing about the request.

At the recent meeting of the board, Dr. C. K. Rand—as he had previously announced that he would do—appeared in person and requested permission to speak; which permission was granted by Dr. Perry Crouch, new board president.

Upon being given the floor, Dr. Rand asked if the Rev. Woodrow Robbins might first speak, and this request was granted. Robbins related how that some two years ago, due to incomplete and misleading information, he supported the State Supreme Court decision in the North Rocky Mount Church case, but that later, after being given more complete information and after being privileged to see the court record of that case, he was led to take a positive stand against the decision and against the Baptist leaders who had testified in the trial for the minority. Robbins mentioned in particular the testimony which had been given by the General Secretary of the state convention, Dr. M. A. Huggins; he stated that in the fall of 1955 he wrote to Dr. Huggins, telling him that if satisfactory explanation could not be given of this un-Baptistic and disconcerting testimony, “then we need a new state secretary.” Robbins read a letter which Dr. Huggins had written, in which, apparently in direct contradiction to what the official court record showed him as having said under oath, he stated that when he wrote in a book some years before that Baptist churches are completely autonomous he “*did mean*” what he said. Then Robbins commenced to read a letter, which had been written to Dr. Huggins by the attorney who cross-examined

him in the trial, Mr. H. Vinson Bridgers, of Tarboro, N. C. In this letter, Mr. Bridgers accused Dr. Huggins of stating “a deliberate and utter falsehood” in the attempt to offer explanation of his denial under oath of what he had written in his book. Robbins was not permitted to read this letter in its entirety, for time was called on him, and there seemed no disposition on the part of the board for the full evidence against the state secretary to be presented. (One of the board members, the Rev. Warren Carr, even suggested that Robbins be allowed to speak—provided that no more letters be read!).

Dr. C. K. Rand was given two minutes to speak. He plainly said before the Board, “I *know* that cooperative program funds have been spent in connection with this court case—in spite of the fact that Brother Bullard has stated, in writing, that ‘no amount has been paid to any group in connection with this case.’”

Rand informed the Board that a careful investigation of the records of Nash Superior Court disclosed that there were no subpoenas issued, nor any expenses paid by the court, to any of the following witnesses who testified for the minority in that case: Dr. W. W. Barnes (who, in coming all the way from Texas, must have incurred considerable expenses), Dr. M. A. Huggins, Dr. Harold Tribble, Dr. E. A. McDowell, and the Rev. Douglas Branch.

Rand asked why it is that Baptists who help financially support the state convention are not permitted to look into their own books. He threw this challenge to the board:

“If you think that I don’t know what I’m talking about when I say that I KNOW that certain cooperative program funds have been used in connection with this case, then open the books AND PROVE ME A LIAR!”

But the board did nothing about opening the books. No one contested what Rand said about the books. In fact, as reported by the United Press, “When Rand finished his plea the Rev. *Naine Starnes* [of Asheville] asked, ‘*What difference does it make?*’” (Jan. 15, emphasis supplied).

Although no one contested what Rand said about the books, Woodrow Bullard

did call in question something that Rand had said about *another* matter. Rand had alleged that the board, in its meeting of a year ago, had released to the public a false statement in that it was unanimously proclaimed by the board that the question of the court testimony given in the Rocky Mount case had been "adequately discussed" in the 1955 meeting of the State Convention. Rand had stated: "Why the court testimony, far from being 'adequately discussed,' was not even allowed to be discussed at all; for Doug' Branch — who himself had given some very unusual testimony — ruled out of order the effort to discuss the testimony!" *Bullard said before the board that no such statement had been released in the meeting a year before. Whereupon Rand got up and said, "I would like to read something to prove that I am right." But Rand was not permitted to read one word!*

The N. C. Baptist state paper, *Biblical Recorder*, has given this account of the matter:

"Proceeding the work of the committees, Woodrow W. Robbins and C. K. Rand at their request were permitted to make brief statements concerning the North Rocky Mount Church case and the question of the freedom and autonomy of the local church. The main requests were (1) that the *testimony* as given at the North Rocky Mount trial be restudied; (2) that the *detailed items of the convention audit be made public* so that, as they said, the people could know whether any *money out of the convention funds was used in prosecuting* the trial at Rocky Mount. The general feeling was that these matters had been *sufficiently discussed* and dealt with by the convention in the last year or two" (Jan. 26, emphasis supplied). (We would like for the editor of the *Biblical Recorder*, or anybody else, to tell us in specifically what way—apart from the mere request that such discussion be permitted — either of these matters were so much as mentioned at either the 1955 session of the N. C. Baptist State Convention or the 1956 session.)

VOTE OF CONFIDENCE

The board's response to the informa-

tion which Robbins had presented and to Rand's request for the books to be opened was to issue a resolution expressing "complete confidence" in Dr. Huggins and other convention officials. The Associated Press has thus reported the Board's action:

"The general board of the Baptist State Convention today gave its General Secretary M. A. Huggins and other officers a vote of confidence in the face of attacks on the church autonomy issue.

"The board adopted a resolution 'approving the work' and 'expressing complete confidence in the ability, efficiency, integrity and character' of Huggins and other officers of the state convention.

"The resolution constituted the board's answer to a request by the Rev. C. K. Rand of High Point that it's books be opened to determine whether convention funds had been spent in litigation . . . over the North Rocky Mount Baptist Church. . . .

"The board said it was adopting its resolution of 'complete confidence' in Huggins and other leaders 'in view of allegations and inuendo by certain dissidents' within (the) state convention 'impugning the integrity, honesty, character and ability' of Huggins and the other leaders" (Jan. 15, emphasis supplied).

NEXT MOVE?

Thus for the third time the request, through proper channels, to have the books opened has been turned down. Following the Board's refusal to do anything about the matter last July, the State Convention itself, in November, refused even to allow the matter to be discussed. And now the Board has refused again. **What recourse is left for cooperating Baptists who would like to see where some of the money, which they have contributed, has been spent?** Under the regime of the present leadership of the N. C. State Convention, there would seem nothing left but an appeal to Caesar. As reported by Jay Jenkins in the *Charlotte Observer* (Jan. 16):

"Both Dr. Rand and the Rev. Mr. Robbins said the 'Committee for Baptist Church Autonomy' is considering whether to go to court and seek a court order requiring the state convention officials to open their books."